



Department of Justice

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ROCHESTER MAN SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON FOR PROVIDING NON-COMPLIANT SCREWS FOR COMBAT HELMETS

ROCHESTER, N.Y.--U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Greg Tremaine, 57, of Spencerport, N.Y., who was convicted of filing a false claim with the United States Government and filing a false document, was sentenced to 12 months in federal prison by U.S. District Court Judge David G. Larimer. The defendant was also placed on supervised release following his release from prison, and was ordered to pay a \$10,000 fine, and repay \$134,271 in restitution to the Army.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Craig R. Gestring, who handled the case, stated that Tremaine was the Vice President of A.J. Hughes Company, a Rochester based manufacturer of steel screws. In 2006, A.J. Hughes started selling steel screws to Gentex Corporation, a defense contractor based in Pennsylvania, for use in the manufacturer of military protective helmets used by the United States Army and Marine Corps.

There are four external screws used in each helmet which attach the suspension system and chin strap assembly to the helmet. Since the screws penetrate the helmet and mount on the outside, they must meet the same ballistic integrity standards as the rest of the helmet shell. The government required that the screws used in the helmets were made of a specific type of steel which was then coated with a specific type of spray on protective coating. This requirement was based on the initial product design specifications and the helmets and all their sub-components were subject to extensive testing, including specific ballistic impact testing of the screws. Tremaine knew that the screws were to be used to fulfill a United States military procurement contract and was aware of the specific requirements for both the type of steel and type of coating needed for the screws for use in the helmets.

During the course of the contract, Tremaine changed both the type of steel and type of finish used to make the screws Hughes sold to Gentex. He did so without the approval or knowledge of Gentex and never notified the Government or Gentex about the alterations. The non-compliant screws looked the same, and could only be identified through metallurgic analysis. Tremaine then falsified certificates of compliance on each shipping invoice to indicate that the screws he provided were in compliance with the government requirement when, in fact, he knew they were not. During the course of the fraud, Tremaine also created false production diagrams which he would use to show people at his company when they asked why a different type of steel was used. He retained the original drawings to show Gentex to prove compliance with the contract requirements.

Based on Tremaine's actions, non-compliant, and in some cases, screws with a ballistically inferior coating were used in the manufacture of thousands of military protective helmets which were fielded to Soldiers and Marines. The non-compliant screws were detected by Gentex after an alert worker on the company's assembly line noticed a subtle change in the appearance of the screws. Gentex performed additional testing and metallurgic analysis and determined that the type of steel and coating were different from the required materials. Once they became aware of the problem, Gentex immediately notified the Army and the Marine Corps and actively assisted in the investigation and the recall of the defective screws.

As a direct result of Tremaine's actions, the government overpaid \$134,271 for defective screws. Tremaine's actions also caused the Army and Marine Corps to recall over 44,000 helmets worldwide; including helmets from Korea, Iraq, and Afghanistan, to replace the defective screws. In total, the defendant provided over 1.8 million non-compliant screws for use in the combat helmets.

In sentencing the defendant, Judge Larimer stated that the defendant's fraud was serious because it created a risk of harm to soldiers and Marines. Judge Larimer also said that there should be a message in his sentence to those who contract with the government to supply the military.

"As I have said in the past, this case is about much more than dollars and cents, it's about life and death," said U.S. Attorney Hochul. "All U.S. Soldiers and Marines deserve the very best equipment available to do the dangerous work they do each and every day. Their missions are dangerous enough – and require the highest degree of attention to detail - without having to add the worry of whether their equipment will function properly. Anyone who attempts to reap a financial benefit by putting our military men and women in harm's way will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

The sentencing was the culmination of an investigation on the part of Special Agents of the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division Command, Major Procurement Fraud Unit (MPFU), under the direction of Forrest W. Woodward; the Department of Defense, Office of Inspector General, Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS), under the direction of Edward T. Bradley; and Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), under the direction of John McCoy.

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